



FOR CLERK USE ONLY

City Council

Item No. 9

## CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

## FACT SHEET

Utility Services

Department

April 6, 2010

Requested Date

## 1. Request:

Council Approval

☒Information Only/  
Presentation☐

Other (specify)

☐

Hearing

☐

## 2. Requested Action:

Calexico Dial A Ride Program Fare Increase

## 3. Fiscal Impact:

Revenue

Increase

☐

Source:

Decrease

☐

Amount:

Cost:

Increase

☐

Source:

Decrease

☐

Amount:

## 4. Reviewed By:

Finance Dept. on \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments:

By: \_\_\_\_\_

City Attorney on \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments:

By: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Back up must be submitted along with this form. Deadline is 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, prior to the scheduled meeting date.*

## CLERK USE ONLY:

## CITY COUNCIL DATE:

Action

☐

Consent

☐

Hearing

☐

Filing

☐

Presentation

☐

Other (specify)

☐

Reviewed by: City Clerk \_\_\_\_\_

City Manager \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# **CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

**SUBJECT:** Calexico Dial A Ride Program Fare Increase

**AGENDA DATE:** April 6, 2010

**PREPARED BY:** Luis Estrada, Director of Utility Services 

**APPROVED FOR AGENDA BY:** Victor Carrillo, City Manager

**RECOMMENDATION:** It is recommended the City Council approve the following:

1. Increase fare to \$1.00 per trip to meet minimum 10% fare box ratio required by Article 8c Transportation Development Act (TDA)

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Refer to attached spreadsheet

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION: (Prior action/information)**

The City of Calexico receives state funding annually to provide transportation for senior citizens and the disabled within City limits. The service is regulated according to the provisions of the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA), Transportation Development Act (TDA), and any other applicable state and local law or regulations. Funding is allocated annual to the City of Calexico from local transportation fund Article 8c.

Back in 1999, senior citizens and the disabled paid \$1.00 per trip. In June 2000, the City Council approved a reduction of fares to \$0.75 per trip to meet minimum 10% fare box ratio required by Article 8c (previously known Article 4).

TDA requires a minimum of ten percent (10%) fare box ratio be collected from the riders otherwise the City may lose funding. Reports received from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, reflect an average of 8% fare box ratio and July 1, 2009 to February 28, 2010, reflect an average of 9% fare box ratio.

**DISCUSSION (Current consideration):**

Attached spreadsheet reflects the FY2009-2010 budget which shows the current fare \$0.75 per trip and the proposed increase of \$1.00. The \$1.00 fare rate increase would be very close to meeting the 10% fare box ratio. Do note that it is difficult to estimate the number of riders in any given year. The number of riders shown in this spreadsheet is an average taken from the past 8 months. Should the riders fall below the estimate and not meet the minimum 10% fare box ratio, the City would be required to reevaluate the fare and increase it again.

**DOCUMENT(S) ATTACHED:**

1. Fare Rate Increase Spreadsheet

2. Comparison of Dial A Ride Programs in the Imperial Valley
3. IVAG Public Transit Fare Analysis

**Agenda Item No. \_\_\_\_**

**Page \_\_\_\_ Of \_\_\_\_**

CITY OF CALEXICO  
UTILITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

CALEXICO DIAL A RIDE PROGRAM  
CURRENT/PROPOSED FARE RATE

	ITC Budget 2009-2010	Average # of Riders	Est. Amt. of Fare	Percent	Est. of Fare Collected	Subsidy
Proposed	341,172	3,329	1.00	12%	39,948	301,224
	341,172	3,329	0.95	11%	37,951	303,221
	341,172	3,329	0.85	10%	33,956	307,216
Current	341,172	3,329	0.75	9%	29,961	311,211

**CITY OF CALEXICO  
UTILITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

**Fare Structure for Dial-A-Ride Services**

<b>Services</b>	<b>Eligibility</b>	<b>Adult Fare</b>	<b>Discount</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Hours of Operation</b>	<b>Days of Operation</b>
Brawley	General Public	\$1.00	Children under 5 years	Brawley Dial A Ride	8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m.	6
Calexico	Senior (60 or older) and persons with disabilities	\$0.75	None	First Transit	7:00a.m. to 5:00p.m.	7
El Centro	General Public	\$1.25	None	ARC	7:00a.m. to 6:00p.m.	6
Imperial	Senior (60 or older) and persons with disabilities Within City Limits To El Centro	\$1.25 \$1.75	None	ARC	7:00a.m. to 6:00p.m. 8:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. (Sat.)	6
West Shores	General Public	\$2.00	None	ARC	7:00a.m. to 3:45p.m.	3(T,W,TH)

IMPERIAL VALLEY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (IVAG)

# Public Transit Services Fare Analysis

Final Report



June 2008

**Nelson|Nygaard**  
consulting associates

## **Chapter 9. Fare Recommendations and Implementation Timeline**

### **Introduction**

This chapter recommends a fare structure for Imperial County transit services including Imperial Valley Transit, AIM Transit and the local dial-a-ride services. It includes a series of tasks to implement short-term recommendations next fiscal year and longer-term recommendations over a two year period.

### **Recommended Fare Strategy**

#### **Imperial Valley Transit**

Based upon our analysis, Nelson\Nygaard recommends Option 3 be pursued as a new fare structure for Imperial Valley Transit. It includes a 25% increase in fares for adult riders and a slight decrease in fares for seniors, persons with disabilities and Medicare card holders, to comply with FTA regulations for discounted fares. Fares on Fast Trip would also increase 33%. The Blue Line would no longer have a unique fare; it would become part of the IVT fare structure to both simplify fares and attract new ridership. Transfers would be free of charge on the Blue Line and would be valid for a one-hour period and used for the next bus traveling in the same direction similar to transfers on IVT routes.

The recommended Option 3 is based on a new zone structure. It consists of a local and a regional fare zone (See Figure 7-1, on page 7-2). Travel within local zones would be charged a local fare, whereas travel beyond a local zone would be charged a regional fare.

The proposed new fare structure for IVT is summarized in Figure 9-1 below. Please note that the recommended fare structure consists of a two-step increase for regional travel; in FY 2008/09 from \$0.60 to \$1.00 and a second increase in two years from \$1.00 to \$1.25. The basis for this two-step increase is to reduce the financial impact on riders.

**Figure 9-1 Recommended New Fares for Imperial Valley Transit**

Imperial Valley Transit	Option 3*
<b>Cash Fares</b>	
<b>Adult</b>	
Local Fare	\$0.75
Regional Fare	\$1.00
Direct Routes	\$2.00
Fast Trip (New Route as of 7/1/08)	\$2.00
IVC Express (no change from current fare)	\$1.00
Blue Line (Within El Centro)	\$0.75
Transfer to Blue Line	\$0.00
<b>Senior/Disabled (1)</b>	
Local Fare	\$0.35
Regional Fare	\$0.50
Direct Routes	\$2.00
Fast Trip (New Route as of 7/1/08)	\$2.00
IVC Express (no change from current fare)	\$1.00
Blue Line (Within El Centro)	\$0.35
<b>20-Ride Punch Cards (2)</b>	
<b>Adult</b>	
Local Fare	\$12.00
Discount	20%
Regional Fare	\$20.00
Discount	20%
<b>Senior/Disabled (1)</b>	
Local Fare	\$7.00
Discount	0%
Local Fare	\$12.00
Discount	0%
<b>Day Pass (3)</b>	
Local Fare (Adult & Senior/Disabled)	\$2.00
Regional Fare (Adult & Senior/Disabled)	\$3.50
<b>Summer Youth Pass (4)</b>	
Summer Youth Pass	\$20.00

## Notes:

\*Consists of a two-step increase for the Adult Cash Regional Fare: \$1.00 in FY 2008/09 and \$1.25 in FY 2010/11

(1) Passengers with a Medicare Card are eligible for the discounted fare. Local and regional senior cash fare is offered at 50% discount during all service hours even though the Federal requirement is for peak periods only

(2) Available for local fare and regional fare. Punch cards are valid for a period of six months. Expiration date will be printed on reverse side of card.

(3) Available for local fare and regional fare. No discounted day pass is offered.

(4) Good for unlimited rides for youth ages 12- 17 years, from 6/15 - 9/1(exact dates will be based on school schedule)



## AIM Transit

Option 3 is recommended as a new fare structure for AIM Transit, as shown in Figure 9-2. The zone structure for AIM Transit would be the same as for Imperial Valley Transit, with the service area continuing to include a ¾ mile buffer of the IVT fixed route network. Fares would increase by 25% for the local fare.

**Figure 9-2 Proposed New Fares for AIM Transit**

AIM Transit	Option 3
<b>ADA</b>	
Local Fare	\$1.50
Regional Fare	\$2.50
<b>Senior/Disabled (1)</b>	
Local Fare	\$2.25
Regional Fare	\$3.75

(1) Passengers with a Medicare Card are eligible for the discounted fare

## Dial-A-Ride Services

Only one fare option was considered for each of the dial-a-ride services. El Centro Dial-A-Ride and Imperial Dial-A-Ride each have a farebox recovery requirement of 20%, whereas Brawley Dial-A-Ride and Calexico Dial-A-Ride have a farebox recovery ratio standard of 10%. A fare increase is recommended for the El Centro or Imperial Dial-A-Ride services to meet this requirement. Even though the farebox recovery ratio is meeting the 10% requirement for the dial-a-ride services in Brawley and Calexico, a fare increase is recommended because operating costs face increasing upward pressure and it has been several years since fares were raised. Though each city sets fares for their own dial-a-ride service, Nelson\Nygaard recommends a modest fare increase for each of the dial-a-ride services. The recommended fare structure is presented in Figure 9-3 below.

**Figure 9-3 Proposed New Fares for Dial-A-Ride Services**

Dial-A-Ride Services	Option 1
Brawley Dial-A-Ride	\$1.25
Calexico Dial-A-Ride	\$1.00
El Centro Dial-A-Ride	\$1.75
<b>Imperial Dial-A-Ride</b>	
Within city limits	\$0.75
To El Centro	\$1.75

## **Recommended New Fare Media**

### **Day Pass**

It is recommended that a day pass be introduced as a replacement for the one-ride tickets distributed by schools and social service agencies. With a day pass, the one ride tickets that are now sold or given free of charge by schools and social service agencies could be eliminated.

### **Transfers**

It is recommended that IVT consider replacing the transfer card with a paper transfer. Transfers would continue to be time-limited for 60 minutes and would be issued by drivers when passengers board the bus. They would be color coded for the validation date and have unique identification numbers for tracking by driver. Transfers would be collected when used as payment and deposited in the farebox enabling a periodic counting of transfer usage by route including the Blue Line. Drivers would be required to verify the time marked on the transfer to ensure it is being used before the time on the transfer expires. Passing of transfers between passengers would be strictly prohibited.

### **Punch cards**

It is recommended that ticket books with tear-off tickets be developed to replace the punch cards currently in use. It could be purchased by one family member and shared with other family members allowing multiple people to use it unlike the punch card which is more limiting. Other advantages of a 20-ride ticket book include speeding up operations by eliminating delays by punching the cards and improving and simplifying internal accounting processes by simply counting the number of tickets deposited in the farebox.

### **Summer Youth Pass**

A summer youth pass is recommended for implementation in the summer 2009. This pass would be available to middle and high school students, ages 12 through 17. An ID will be required to demonstrate eligibility. Ideally, students could purchase the pass through their school.

## **Achievements of Study Objectives**

A series of objectives were developed at the outset of this study to guide its direction and help in the decision making process. The major objectives and the ability of the fare options to meet these objectives are discussed below.

**Objective 1: Develop fare options that minimize loss of passengers and maximize fare revenue to achieve the state farebox recovery requirements.**

The state requirement for IVT is 13.4%. It is expected that implementation of Option 3 including the two-step increase for regional travel, would achieve this objective. Ridership is expected to experience a modest drop as a result of the fare increase, but this would be offset by an increase in revenue per passenger, and continued ridership growth over a longer period of time.

Even with the recommended fare increase on AIM Transit, only a very minor decline in ridership is anticipated. This is consistent with ADA services in other communities that have raised fares.

As noted earlier, Imperial Dial-A-Ride and El Centro Dial-A-Ride have a farebox recovery requirement of 20%, because they operate in urban areas. Brawley Dial-A-Ride and Calexico Dial-A-Ride operate in rural areas, and therefore have a farebox recovery standard of 10%. Implementation of Option 1 for the dial-a-ride services is expected to help Imperial and El Centro meet their standards, though additional ridership growth and/or mitigation of rising operating costs will also be necessary.

**Objective 2: Ensure that fare options are equitable for different types of service and do not negatively impact targeted passenger groups.**

The proposed fare structure for IVT will comply with the Federal requirement that seniors, persons with disabilities and Medicare card holders receive a 50% discount compared to adult cash fares. Likewise, the proposed fare structure for AIM Transit maintains a discount for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Under the current fare system, a higher fare is charged for the Blue Line though it operates like other IVT routes. It is also the only route that currently charges for transfers. Though it will be important to maintain an independent farebox for funding and reporting purposes, it is recommend that the fare be the same as on other local routes to be more equitable.

Implementing a day pass, especially for distribution by social service agencies that provide them to their clients will continue to maintain this valued subsidy while increasing convenience and mobility for those who use them.

The proposed new zone structure also maintains the practice of charging a higher fare for longer distance and express trips.

**Objective 3: Develop an easily understood fare structure that is responsive to both passenger and driver concerns.**

It will take some time for passengers to adjust to the new zone structure but it will ultimately be easier to understand. Incorporating the Blue Line into the IVT fare structure will eliminate confusion passengers expressed about the separate fare and transfer charge. It will also make it simpler from the driver's perspective. Replacing punch cards with ticket books and using paper transfers rather than transfer cards is responsive to driver concerns that they are difficult and time consuming to handle and prefer a simplified fare instrument.

## **Longer-Term Considerations**

The following new fare instruments were explored during this study. While they each have merit, they require lead-time for additional study, negotiations with outside parties or enhanced staff resources before they can be implemented.

### **31-Day Rolling Pass**

While some stakeholders and riders, especially students, liked the idea of a monthly or 31-day rolling pass, other stakeholders thought that a monthly fare instrument may be cost prohibitive for many IVT riders. Since a day pass is recommended for short term implementation, it is prudent to monitor passenger acceptance with this pass before introducing another new pass type.

### **College Pass**

Imperial Valley College (IVC) would have to be receptive to the concept of assessing student fees for transportation before a college pass could be implemented. Even though IVC has actively participated in this study and has a strong interest in transportation, further discussions would be necessary with both the college administration and students to garner support for an increase in student fees to pay for a college pass. IVAG and IVC are encouraged to collaborate develop a detailed plan for a possible student vote in the next couple of years.

### **Photo Identification Card for Discounted Passengers**

The purpose of introducing a photo identification card for discounted passengers is to eliminate driver subjectivity and verify a passengers' eligibility for a discounted fare. Ideally, one photo ID card for discounted passengers would be issued for travel on all Imperial County transit services. Because there are currently no uniform criteria for age requirements or disability, it would require all services to reach agreement on qualifying criteria. Since it would require a considerable amount of staff time to reach consensus on qualifying criteria and identify a lead agency to take on this responsibility, this recommendation is suggested as a longer-term consideration.

### **Implementation Timeline**

This chapter has presented fare structure and policy recommendations for IVT and AIM Transit that require a significant number of tasks to implement the recommended changes. These tasks would need to be further refined by County of Imperial staff, and additional steps may be necessary depending on how staff chooses to implement the recommendations in this fare policy report.

Figure 9-4 on page 9-9 presents a summary of these key steps and a suggested schedule for their implementation. The length of time it may take to fully implement the longer-term

recommendations could vary from one to two years, depending on staff resources, participation from local jurisdictions, and funding.

## **Public Hearing and Approval Process**

IVAG is encouraged to establish a policy to provide guidance for soliciting public input prior to a fare increase. The policy should explain how IVAG and the County will inform and involve public transit riders, stakeholders, and the general public about proposed changes in transit fares. Guidelines for this process follow:

- A public hearing should be held by IVAG for IVT and AIM Transit fare changes. The public hearing should be held at the IVAG offices during a regularly scheduled meeting of the IVAG Board and/or the Imperial County Board of Supervisors. Public meetings should be held at a time and location that is accessible by users of these transit services. Public hearings for fare changes on the dial-a-ride services in Brawley, Calexico, El Centro and Imperial should be held at Council meetings in the cities where local residents will be affected by fare changes.
- *Notices, flyers, or other public notices* in both English and Spanish could be posted on board buses at least 15 calendar days prior to the public hearing. They should include a description of the proposed fare change, the date, time, and location of the public hearing to inform the riding public about the proposed changes and how to provide public comment. The notices could also be posted on the Imperial Valley Transit website.
- A flyer or notice of the public hearing should be provided at least 15 calendar days prior to the public hearing meeting date in local newspapers including appropriate community publications. The public hearing notice should include a description of proposed fare changes, the date, time, and location of the public hearing.

## **Public Education and Outreach**

Following approval of a fare change, IVAG and its partner cities should develop a public education and outreach campaign before implementing the fare change. This should include updating and distributing written about IVT and AIM Transit fares, as well as conducting marketing and outreach activities to help the public understand the basis for the fare increase and an explanation of the new fare fares, fare instruments and other information. Written information needs to be updated in the Bus book, the Blue Line Brochure, one page flyers on AIM Transit and local dial-a-ride services. The website should also be updated with updated fares.

In addition to updating written Information, IVAG is encouraged to widely distribute the information through local community organizations, schools, senior centers, libraries, and local retailers. Collaborating with the SSTAC members to “get the word out” about the fare increase can be an effective strategy for reaching transit riders. A key objective is to inform passengers about the fare increase before it is implemented so they are aware of it, understand the fare changes and the benefits of new fare instruments (such as the day

pass). Notifying passengers in advance of a fare increase and the reasons it is necessary was a common theme expressed by many stakeholders during this study.

## **Contractor Operator Training**

The transit operators are frequently the front line ambassadors of a transit service, providing information about routes and fares. It is therefore imperative that drivers understand the new fare structure and media and are well versed and feel comfortable answering questions of the transit riding public. To familiarize drivers with the new fare structure, the contractor should conduct special classroom trainings about the fares; new fare instruments and have "hands on" sessions at least one month prior to implementation.

## **Sales and Distribution Network**

To support sales and promote the use of the day pass, it will need to be sold on-board the buses by operators. As with other fare collection, exact change only should be accepted.

While ticket books are currently sold at various city halls and IVC, it is desirable to expand the sales and distribution network of tickets and day passes to other locations throughout Imperial County such as the Imperial Valley Mall, middle and high schools and check-cashing locations, community libraries, etc. This recommendation responds to passenger and stakeholder comments that they would like to have fare instruments sold at grocery stores and other retail establishments. Under this type of arrangement, Imperial County staff would distribute IVT fare instruments to local retailers on consignment. Under such an agreement, a local outlet would have a standing order for tickets and passes. Staff would mail or deliver the passes to these locations each month. The vending outlet would pay IVAG only for the passes actually sold or distributed, and would return all unused passes to IVAG. Consignment programs have been very successful in many communities as a means for facilitating pass sales, as well as building ridership.

**Figure 9-4 Implementation Timeline**

Sample Implementation Tasks	FY 2007/08	FY 2008/09				FY 2009/10				FY 2010/11			
	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
<b>Public Adoption Process</b>													
Prepare policy guidelines													
Advertise for Public Hearing													
Conduct Public Hearing													
Respond to Comments													
Adopt New Fare Structure													
<b>Public Education and Outreach</b>													
Update Bus book to reflect new fare structure and policies													
Update web site													
Prepare One-page flyers or "take ones"													
Write short article for distribution in local newspapers and publications													
Conduct community outreach (senior centers, libraries, IVC, etc)													
Conduct new fare "kick off event"													
<b>Contractor Training</b>													
Finalize methodology for tracking Blue Line passenger revenues													
Develop training program and schedule													
Conduct training with all operators and dispatch staff													
<b>Sales and Distribution Network</b>													
Design and print new transfers and ticket books													
Design and print day passes													
Distribute fare media to existing outlets													

**Public Transit Services Fare Analysis • FINAL REPORT**  
IMPERIAL VALLEY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (IVAG)

Sample Implementation Tasks	FY 2007/08	FY 2008/09				FY 2009/10				FY 2010/11			
	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Solicit new vendors for selling fare media													
Implement and monitor													
<b>Implementation and Monitoring</b>													
Plan for October 1, 2008 implementation													
Implement new fares and fare instruments													
Ongoing monitoring of ridership and farebox recovery ratio													
Monitor day pass usage and Blue Line passenger revenues													
Implement summer youth pass													
Implement step two of fare increase (as appropriate)													
<b>Planning for Longer-Term Considerations</b>													
Determine interest in uniform criteria for discounted passengers													
Develop detailed plan for photo ID for discounted passengers													
Conduct detailed planning for 31-day rolling													
Begin discussions with IVC about college pass													